The first time I ever saw Mr. Shaw in the flesh—I hope he will pardon me such an anti-vegetarian expression—was when he took his call after the first production of " Captain Brassbound's Conversion " by the Stage Society. He was quite unlike what I had imagined from his letters.

When at last I was able to play in " Captain Brassbound's Conversion/' I found Bernard Shaw wonderfully patient at rehearsal. I look upon him as a good, kind, gentle creature whose " brain-storms " are just due to the Irishman's love of a fight; they never spring from malice or anger. It doesn't answer to take Bernard Shaw seriously, He is not a man of convictions. That is one of the charms of his plays—to me at least. One never knows how the cat is really jumping. But it *jumps*- Bernard Shaw is alive, with nine lives, like that cat!

On Whit Monday, 1902, I received a telegram from Mr. Tree saying that he was coming down to Winchelsea to see me on " an important matter of business/[1] I was at the time suffering from considerable depression about the future.

The Stratford-on-Avon visit had inspired me with the feeling that there was life in the old 'un yet, and had distracted my mind from the strangeness of no longer being at the Lyceum permanently with Henry Irving. But there seemed to be nothing ahead, except two matinees a week with Mm at the Lyceum, to be followed by a provincial tour in which I was only to play twice a week, as Henry's chief attraction was to be " Faust/' This sort of

" dowager" engagement did not tempt me. Besides, I hated the idea of drawing a large salary and doing next to no work.

r So when Mr. Tree proposed that I should play Mrs. Page (Mrs. Kendal being Mrs. Ford) in " The Merry Wives